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are anxiously asked what their grandfather has said. The replies of the old women are generally of such doubtful import, that whatever happens they may seem to have predicted the truth. Sometimes the devil is consulted by different women, in different tents, the same night. At day-break one party will pertinaciously assert that the enemy are on the approach, which the other as obstinately denying, a conflict of opinions ensues between these foolish interpreters of oracles, which generally ends in a bloody quarrel. Sometimes one of the jugglers is desired to call up the shade of a dead man, from which they may immediately learn what their fates reserve for them. A promiscuous multitude of every age and sex flocks to the necromancer's tent. The juggler is concealed beneath a bull's hide, which serves in the same manner as a stage-curtain. Having muttered a few extemporary verses, sometimes with a mournful, at others with a commanding voice, he at length declares that the shade of such a person, whoever the people choose, is present: Him he interrogates over and over again on future events, and, changing his voice, answers to himself whatever he thinks proper. Not one of the auditors dares to doubt of the presence of the shade, or the truth of its words. An Abipon of noble family and good under-

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101 nation, and used a separate language. In the
619 last century, the Spaniards, whom they had gone out to slaughter, surprized them by the way, and almost destroyed them all. A few who survived the massacre, with the widows and children of the slain, joined the neighbouring Abipones, and both nations, by inter-marriages, coalesced into one; the old language of the Yaaucanigas falling into disuse. The Abi-
619 ponian tribes pursue the same manner of life, and their customs and language, with the exception of a few words, are alike. Wondrous
[618] unanimity, and a constant alliance in arms, reigned amongst them as long as they had to deal with the Spaniards, against whom, as against a mutual foe, they bear an innate hatred, and whose servitude they resist with united strength. But though bound by the ties of consanguinity and friendship, impatient of the
[578] smallest injury, they eagerly seize on any occasion of war, and frequently weaken each other with mutual slaughter.

595 Like the other American savages, some of the
586 Abipones practise polygamy and divorce. Yet they are by no means numerous; the whole
161 nation consisting of no more than five thousand people. Intestine skirmishes, excursions against the enemy, the deadly contagion of the

1 [i.e., the Yaaucanigas, a group of Abipon. – Analyst]

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attendance as is usual with other nations. They invest him neither with the authority of a judge, an arbitrator, or an avenger. Drunken men frequently kill one another; women quarrel, and often imbrue their hands in one another's blood; young men, fond of glory or booty, rob the Spaniards, to whom they had promised peace, of whole droves of horses, and sometimes secretly slay them: and the cacique, though aware of all these things, dares not say a word. If he were but to rebuke them for these transgressions, which are reckoned amongst the merits, virtues, and victories of the savages, with a single harsh word, he would be punished in the next drinking-party with the fists of the intoxicated savages, and publicly loaded with insults, as a friend to the Spaniards, and a greater lover of ease than of his people. How often have Ychamenraikin, chief cacique of the Riikahes, and Narè, of the Yaaucanigas, experienced this! How often have they returned from a drinking-party with swelled eyes, bruised hands, pale cheeks, and faces exhibiting all the colours of the rainbow!

But although the Abipones neither fear their cacique as a judge, nor honour him as a master, yet his fellow-soldiers follow him as a leader and governour of the war, whenever the enemy is to be attacked or repelled. Some, however,

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CHAPTER XV.

OF THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE ABIPONES.

157 The Abipones, in their whole deportment, preserve a decorum scarce credible to Europeans. Their countenance and gait display a modest cheerfulness, and manly gravity tempered with gentleness and kindness. Nothing licentious, indecent, or uncourteous, is discoverable in their actions. In their daily meetings, all is quiet and orderly. Confused vociferations, quarrels, or sharp words, have no place there. [522] They love jokes in conversation, but are averse [578] to indecency and ill-nature. If any dispute arises, each declares his opinion with a calm countenance and unruffled speech: they never break out into clamours, threats, and reproaches, as is usual to certain people of Europe. These [273] praises are justly due to the Abipones as long as they remain sober: but when intoxicated, they shake off the bridle of reason, become distracted, and quite unlike themselves. In their 576 assemblies, they maintain the utmost politeness. 623 One scarcely dares to interrupt another, when he is speaking. Whilst one man relates some

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They who have received wounds in the battle deliver themselves to be sucked to a crowd of juggler physicians, a multitude of spectators admiring and extolling their constancy and fortitude. Great numbers flock to behold the spoils and trophies taken from the enemy. The women, giving way to an excess of gladness, seem mad with joy; they would make no end of singing, leaping, and applauding, were they not obliged to turn their attention towards making preparations for the public drinking-party of their husbands; who, at the same time that they wash the horrible colours from their faces, endeavour to clear from their minds, with wine, their past anxiety respecting the conflict. In the assembly of drinkers, where the victory is celebrated amidst confused clamours, and songs accompanied with the sound of gourds and drums; when all are heated with liberal draughts of mead, each begins to relate his own brave actions, and to laugh at the errors, cowardice, and flight of others; which not being endured by any of the Abipones, the warriors contend furiously amongst themselves, first with fists, and then, growing more enraged, with spears and arrows. Did not the women interpose to effect a reconciliation, and employ themselves in snatching away their weapons, and leading their husbands home, it is beyond xxx doubt that more would be killed after the battle than in the battle.

[727 755] [703 626 578 521] [562 593]

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562 [834] [462] it would be wrong to be silent upon their sobriety and temperance. It costs them much labour to prepare a sweet drink for their husbands of honey and the alfaroba: but they never even taste it themselves, being condemned to 578 pure water the whole of their lives. Would that they as carefully abstained from strife and contentions, as they do from all strong drink! Quarrels certainly do arise amongst them, and often end in blood, upon the most trivial occasions. They generally dispute about things of no consequence, about goats' wool, as Horace expresses it, or the shadow of an ass. One word uttered by a scolding woman is often the cause and means of exciting a mighty war. 195 578 The Abipones, in anger, use the following terms of reproach: *Acami Lanaʔaik*, you are an Indian, that is, plebeian, ignoble; *Acami Lichicgaʔaik*, you are poor, wretched; *Acami Ahamʔaik*, you are dead. They sometimes dreadfully misapply these epithets. Who would not laugh to hear a horse, flying as quick as lightning, but which his rider wishes to incite to greater speed, called *Ahamʔaik*, dead? When two women quarrel, one calls the other poor, or low-born, or perhaps lifeless. Presently a loud vociferation is heard, and from words they proceed to 578 579 blows. The whole company of women crowd

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to the market-place, not merely to look on, but to give assistance as they shall think proper. Some defend the one, some the other. The duel soon becomes a battle-royal. They fly at each other's breasts with their teeth like tigers, and often give them bloody bites. They lacerate one another's cheeks with their nails, rend their hair with their hands, and tear the hole of the flap of the ear, into which the roll of palm-leaves is inserted. Though a husband sees his wife, and a father his daughter, bathed in blood and covered with wounds, yet they look on at a distance, with motionless feet, silent tongues, and calm eyes; they applaud their Amazons, laugh, and wonder to see such anger in the souls of women, but would think it beneath a man to take any part in these female battles. If there appears no hope of the restoration of peace, they go to the Father: "See!" say they, "our women are out of their senses again to-day. Go, and frighten them away with a musket." Alarmed at the noise, and even at the sight of this, they hasten back to their tents, but even from thence, with a Stentorian voice, repeat the word which had been the occasion of the combat, and, neither liking to seem conquered, return again and again to the market place, and renew the fight. It seems to have been a regu-

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ensue, about the prerogative of governing the family, and the favour of their husband. *Nejetenta*, as I said before, is a word appropriated to express a contest between two wives about their husband; any other sort of fight is called *Roé-lakitápegeta*.

Let us now speak of the reason that occasions divorce. It is very common amongst them to reject wives to whom they have formerly united themselves, at their own pleasure, and with impunity, so that divines have very properly doubted the reality of the marriage of savages, as it seems to want the perpetuity of the nuptial tie. If their wives displease them, it is sufficient; they are ordered to decamp. No farther cause or objection is sought for; the will of the husband, who dislikes his wife, stands in the place of reason. Should the husband cast his eyes upon any handsomer woman, the old wife must remove merely on this account, her fading form or advanced age being her only accusers, though she may be universally commended for conjugal fidelity, regularity of conduct, diligent obedience, and the children she has born. None of the men of most authority have either the right or the inclination to defend the divorced, or control the divorcer. But, appointing a drinking-party, wherein the memory of

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chief season for drinking. During these months they drink without pause or intermission. They join the night to the day, with scarce any interval for brief meals, or sleep: before they have slept themselves sober they stagger back to the party of drinkers. During all that time you scarce ever find them in possession of their senses; to live, with them, is to drink, and you would say that the more they drank the more thirsty they grew. To show that they do not tremble at the sight of blood, and that they take pleasure in wounds, they emulously prick their breast and arms, and not unfrequently their tongue, with crocodiles' bones, and the sharpest thorns. Disputes too are frequent among them concerning pre-eminence in valour, which produce confused clamours, fighting, wounds, and slaughter. "In that skirmish you basely turned your back on the enemy," one perhaps will say to the other; who, not choosing to endure the reproach, replies "What? What do you say?" till from words they proceed to blows, to arrows, and to spears, unless other persons interfere. It often happens that a contention between two implicates and incites them all, so that snatching up arms, and taking the part, some of one, some of the other, they furiously rush to attack and slay one another. This is no uncommon occurrence in drink-

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ing-parties, and is sometimes carried on for many hours with much vociferation of the combatants, and no less effusion of blood.

Intoxication affects the Abipones in various ways. Some laugh violently, merrier than hilarity itself; others seem oppressed with melancholy; others, inflated with the remembrance of their mighty deeds, grow more threatening and boastful than the Thraso of Terence, or the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus. I knew a man, who, whenever he was drunk, threatened to kill his little son, and as he lay stretched upon the ground, spoke in such loud and angry tones to his wife, that he was heard throughout the whole neighbourhood. There was one man, who, when he was drunk, always requested to be baptized, continually exclaiming, "Make haste, Father, and wash my head!" though, when sober, he never thought anything about baptism. An Abipon, of no reputation amongst his countrymen, entered our house furnished with a bow and arrows, and demanded of me, in a threatening tone, whether I did not think him a captain, that is, a man distinguished for great actions; alarmed at the fierce countenance of the interrogator, and at the bundle of arrows which he bore, I made him a fine panegyric by way of reply, though he was a man universally

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273 despised for his cowardice. An old man in the town of St. Ferdinand, inglorious alike in birth
157 and actions, on being called by his drinking as-
273 sociates, *Lanaîaik*, plebeian, vainly endeavoured
● 578 with arms, and absurd clamours, to avenge the
593 insult; for his wife, a sturdy old woman, always watched over her infuriated husband, that he might not fall by the fists or weapons of his companions. On this occasion she caught hold of him by the legs, or girdle, dragged him through the street, and when got home, vainly exhorted him to sleep and silence; for he, ever recurring to the flouts of his comrades, could take no rest, constantly ejaculating with a hoarse voice, *Tà yeegam! Aym Lanaîaik? Tà yeegam! Là rihè lahè!* "What! I a plebeian? I ignoble? I demand vengeance." Enraged by these reflections, he endeavours again and again to raise himself on his feet, and snatch up a spear, when his angry wife as often knocks him down upon the floor. This sport continued for many hours, to the incredible annoyance of all that dwelt in the neighbourhood. Few could
273 repress indignation, none laughter. Almost all
562 the women have the same task when they labour to disarm their husbands, and take them out of the hands of their drunken comrades. The whole Abiponian nation would come to destruction, if the women and youths attended